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12 July 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Training

SUBJECT : "Total Immersion" Language Training
Experiment

1. The Language Learning Center completed its three-part Total Immersion (TI) language training experiment on 14 June 1974. You received a report on the first phase of the project (Russian) on 17 December 1973. Following is a brief description of the French and Spanish segments, together with our conclusions about the experiment as a whole.

2. French and Spanish Programs

Although there were a number of substantive differences between the Russian program and those in Romance languages, the basic concept remained much the same: 12 students (determined by the capability of the training facility) spent four weeks in the language with native speakers. The target language was used exclusively except for a weekend off at the midpoint. This format, and the 4:1 student/teacher ratio appear to be about right. The curriculum and daily workplan was modified somewhat from the Russian House (Attachment A), but included generally the same mix of activities: formal grammar sessions, vocabulary-building exercises (often with visual aids), news discussion, lectures and discussion by native (or near-native) speakers from the DDO, films, operations problems, and social activities. Following are some of the changes made as a result of the Russian House experience:

a. Proficiency criteria for entrance to the program were more restrictive. We learned from the Russian program that a range of proficiencies from 1+ to 3+ is too wide and adopted the policy that only students at S-2 to S-3 would be accepted. This proved to be a much better student mix. Restricting admission to DDO officers (as opposed to DDI participation in the Russian House) was also

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a positive change in the student population. We would, however, like to have more female students in the program. The Russian House was coed and was better for it. Both the French and Spanish programs were all-male operations except for the faculty.

b. Without doubt the most important change in the French/Spanish programs was in the staffing. We ran the two Romance language programs entirely with resources already in the Language Center. Our original plan, which envisioned using recently-retired, native-speaking DDO officers for their operational expertise, was not fully workable. Not only was the cost much higher to hire outside help, but the program was less effective for the lack of professional teachers on the staff. There is no question that the Russian House was a success, particularly as a pioneer effort; but the French and Spanish programs were significantly better because of the professional competence of the instructors. We were not certain how well such a demanding job would be received by our faculty, especially since it involved a lengthy stay away from home and families. Total immersion programs also make extra demands on the teachers who stay behind in the Center to handle regular classes. But the faculty response was gratifyingly positive. They gave extra effort throughout the strenuous month [REDACTED] and worked together beautifully as a team. To a man they commented on how challenging they found the work; and most felt they had grown professionally as a result of having been there.

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c. Planning for the French/Spanish programs was more extensive than for the Russian House, and materials more carefully organized. Although the time allowed for planning was about the same, we lost a lot in false starts because the Russian House was building a new program from scratch. Not only did we learn from the Russian House experience, but the Program Directors for the French and Spanish houses were the Chief and Deputy Chief of the Romance Languages Department, both of whom were professionally better equipped to develop such a program than was the Director of the Russian House. [REDACTED] did an outstanding

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job of putting the programs together and carrying them through to completion. Their pre-course organization was so well thought out that each of the 300 hours of training was used to good effect.

d. A major change in scheduling was made to improve the programs' treatment of operations-related language material. Where the Russian House worked on general language skills for two weeks before moving into more job-related exercises, the French/Spanish programs started operations-related language exercises after the first week. There seemed to be no slowdown in the students' gains in general vocabulary because of the change, and we were able to spend more time on vocabulary of direct use to the case officer.

25X1A e. Both Romance language programs were conducted
25X1A [REDACTED] The proximity of
25X1A [REDACTED] to the main facilities [REDACTED] resulted in
distracting conversations with English speakers
(during the French House), but these were offset by
gains in being closer to mess and recreational
facilities.

3. Cost

25X1A Since the most expensive item in this type of program is instructor salaries, the exclusive use of LLC personnel reduced costs dramatically in comparison to the Russian House. Not counting costs [REDACTED] for normal operating expenses (air transportation, food, general support) comparative cost of the three courses was as follows:

Russian:	\$8,258
French :	\$2,685
Spanish:	\$3,505

The use of compensatory time for some faculty instead of overtime pay accounts for differences between the two Romance language programs; but either way the courses are cost effective if run entirely with existing assets. It seems likely that no future course of this kind would cost more than ca. \$3500 - \$4000 above the LLC's normal operating costs. If, as we propose, the Center were to offer three or four such courses each year,

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we would have to budget ca. \$14,000 - \$16,000 for them. It seems clear that we are getting a lot for our money. The cost of the now defunct BAHLT program, for example, was \$20,000 annually; and it contributed virtually nothing to the Agency's inventory of useable language skills.

4. Results

a. As in the Russian House, probably the single most noticeable gain for all students in the program was in speaking confidence. This is an ingredient usually missing in normal intensive training, and the key to reaching S-3 proficiency. In the French program nine out of 11 students who started at S-2/S-2+ came out as S-3 or better; in Spanish 10 out of 12 achieved it. (Attachment B)

b. Changes in planning and scheduling resolved the question -- left over from the Russian House -- of whether operations-related vocabulary could be taught effectively while raising proficiencies to S-3. We are now satisfied that it can.

c. All of our questions regarding the feasibility and potential benefits of such programs have now been answered. We do not know whether the difference between the Russian and Romance programs in producing S-3 was due to a difference in the difficulty of the languages or to refinements made in the later programs. But we suspect it was the latter. The Russian House demonstrated that such programs are feasible; the Romance language programs showed us how much they can accomplish if they are done optimally.

d. In addition to the immediate gains for the students involved in these courses, the Language Learning Center gained a number of spin-off benefits from the experiment: curriculum innovations for regular LLC classes (including new applications of video tape), relevant new teaching materials, professional growth for staff and faculty participants, productive liaison and stronger ties with our chief consumers, and an enhanced reputation as a school that can provide a unique service for the Agency.

5. Conclusion

The Language Learning Center now has no reservations about the potential contribution of long-term Total Immersion

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courses to its language training mission. It is felt that such programs could become one of the strongest tools we have to make a direct and noticeable impact on the Agency's Language Development Program. Although it would be desirable to use such TI segments to shorten and strengthen our regular full-time courses, we recognize that it probably cannot be done, given the nature of DDO planning for overseas assignments. We propose, therefore, to offer one program a year in each language for which sufficient in-house staff is available. To judge from consumer response to the experimental project, such a proposal would be well received, particularly if the courses are given during the months before the summer exodus of officers to overseas posts. For FY 1975 we have tentatively scheduled programs in French, Spanish and German during the months of March - June at the [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]
Deputy Chief, Language Learning Center

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ATTACHMENT (A)

WEEK I Day 3

0830 Grammar : The Subjunctive
 1030 Exercise : Description (Students watch slides of various people and describe what they see).
 1215 Lunch
 1315 News : (Each student prepares a news item to present and discuss with his Grammar Group).
 1500 Lecture : "French Cuisine" - Guest Speaker
 1615 Free Time : (During this time most of the students engaged in sports together. The instructors also participated).
 1815 Dinner
 1900 Discussion of Tomorrow's Program
 1930 Student Lecture
 2000 Discussion of Technical Vocabulary (After a discussion of job-related vocabulary, the first week's guest divided the students into groups of 2's and 3's. Each group prepared a skit to present to the rest of the group. The guest gave them such topics as: Cold Approach, Live Dead-Drop, etc).
 2200 End of Day's Program.

WEEK III Day 2

0830 Grammar : Relative Pronouns
 1030 News
 1215 Lunch
 1330 Cocktail Exercise (Role-playing)
 1500 Linguistic Critique of Exercise
 1700 Free Time
 1815 Dinner
 2000 Preparation for exercises: Walk-In, Briefing, Recruitment (Students prepare these exercises in small groups with their instructors and guests).

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